1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *madda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *madda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

[784]

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

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771 on one occasion for the Pen and on another for the Village Mother; even at the annual village festival of the Mother following the clan harvest-home and Koqsar of the Hill Marias the Pen, if honoured, is sometimes honoured on the same stones as the Mother, and not at a separate cairn. It is useless to expect to get any clear-cut distinction between the three conceptions out of a Maria, whose religious ideas are vague and inchoate. He knows only that there are factors which may bring trouble or which may benefit, and that the wise clan and village duly propitiate them, though, if in their turn these unknown factors fail to reciprocate, they will get no further meed of sacrifice for the same immediate object unless the desired benefit is at once granted. An example of this attitude has already been given in the mention in Chapter VII of the deputation that went to see the Gume clan's god to protest against rain preventing the firing of the *penda*, and to promise him a cock if and when he stopped the rain. In the actual formulae pronounced by the village *kasyeq-gaita* in the hills and the *perma* in the Bison-horn country at the sowing and other ceremonies, however, I have never heard the clan-god's name mentioned; they start almost invariably with '*Bhum kenji, Talugh kenji!*' 'Earth hearken, Mother hearken!', sometimes addressing similarly '*Nel*' or fields and '*Jimma Jaga*', all that is around. Here *Bhum* and the clan-god appear to be identical; in the villages where there are both a *kasyeq-gaita* and a *bhum-gaita* in the Abujhmar country, it is the latter who has to preside over the village deputations to the clan-god. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut. In most hill villages there is no separate *bhum-gaita*, and the *kasyeq-gaita* not only performs his work, but is sometimes called *bhum-gaita* or *bhumia*, while in Bison-horn villages the *perma* is *bhum-gaita* and addresses himself in some tracts to the Earth both as Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi, earth-god and earth-goddess, besides being the priest of the Village Mother and the other forms which the earth takes in Bison-horn cults, such as Dongar Deo or Kodo Deo. The *waddai* or *modul-waddai* I have 791 referred to as the clan-priest, and it has been seen how in the Hill Maria clan-areas each village goes to him for the celebration of the clan festival and for obtaining the clan-god's permission to hold the village festival. But the clan-priest is generally not the clan headman even in the Abujhmar hills tracts where the clan-area has become the modern *pargana*. He may or may not be a person of ability and influence. He should be the medium, into whose body the clan-god enters and through whose mouth the god makes his will known to his clan. The secular *pargana* headman is a man of 622 791 far more influence; and in the villages the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* are religious headmen in a way that the clan-priest seldom is

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in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

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the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonisers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhenu-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *pursa* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *pursa*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *pursa* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *kudri-bara* or *wiji-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

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674 754 683 to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

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754 It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuds marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

755 The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

White Magic

[See cat. 116, pp. 423-424. — Ed.]

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The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *hasyaq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *hasyaq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

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565 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally
177 therefore, on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills
466 attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen,
166 etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

[1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate
622 curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the
791 *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

883 462 784 A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

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FIG. 14. *Baras* or *talti* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

[791] [784]

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and ● 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

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in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *gunî* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotis*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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789 the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

791 In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

751 Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to
754 the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

754 Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had
113 seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

MURIA RELIGION

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
787 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jaggu, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Gonds: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Ange should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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791 787. When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matai (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

[293 787]

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horns', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3' 4"

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Kòeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jahrb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

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Plate XLIII

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Siraha medium at Adner, scourging himself

Siraha treating the author for fever, at Mefawand

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825 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurasala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the
171 Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two
532 horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of
787 trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's
791 head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agaphoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

DREAMS

Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest. 787

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done. 787 791

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'. 787

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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X 883 X 884 796 words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

[791]

X 883 X 884 796 784 Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

[778] In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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to perform the worship of the Village Mother. The Pen-793
Waddai or Waddai is the priest of the clan who fulfils spiritual duties for its members. There may be more than one Waddai in a village or, on the other hand, one Waddai may have jurisdiction over several villages. Everything depends on the distribution of the clan members in the locality. The Waddai is of great importance because of his association with the Ancestors and the Dead. He has to purify offenders against the clan rules, and those who have done anything which might conceivably offend the Dead. The Hanagunda may be the Waddai or some lesser personage. His duty is to act as master of ceremonies at a funeral and to perform the special rites of appeasement for the ghost. He becomes of great importance when anyone has met an unnatural death such as being killed by a tiger or has been executed.

In addition to these regular priests, there are a large 791 ●
number of men who are regarded as being in a special way the servants and interpreters of the gods. These men have the power of falling into ecstacy and in this condition divine the will and proclaim the wishes of unseen beings. They are called Siraha or Gunia. They are chiefly in demand for the cure of disease. Since disease is believed to be the result of supernatural activity on the part of some ghost or demon, it is by supernatural means that it must be diagnosed and cured. The Siraha often has houses round his compound for in-patients, and a celebrated medicine-man may attract sick and anxious people from a wide area.

These men, civil or religious, are the real rulers of the 623
Bastar village. Their influence is more far-reaching, their 674x
word is of greater effect than that of the most popular officials. Only the Maharaja, from whom they derive their power, is greater. Today their power is greatly circumscribed, but, as we will see, it has not altogether disappeared. They can still make unbearable the life of witch or sorcerer; they can still ostracize the social rebel; they can still fine the domestic tyrant and subdue the village bully. The ordeal by fire or burning oil still remains a weapon in their hands, and the threat of excommunication is a greater deterrent than many of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

The religious leaders insist on the supernatural dangers of crime, the defilement of jail or handcuffs, the painful death

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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stopping or preventing an epidemic; in order to put an end to a devastating famine; when the earth fails to supply the people with water; with a view to averting perils arising from the sea or from rivers; and in order to prevent the death of some particular person, especially a chief or a king. From these facts I have thought it justifiable to draw the conclusion that human sacrifice is, largely at least, a method of life-insurance, based upon the idea of substitution; and though the human sacrifice offered as a means of putting an end to or averting a ravaging famine and securing an abundant crop has been explained as serving as a magical manure, it may be asked why this particular gruesome kind of manure was chosen if not because human life was in danger.[1]

But in the Bastar cases, there was no danger to life: the sacrifices seem to have been motived by a straightforward desire of gain and to have depended for their efficacy on the power of blood which as the source of life is also a cause of fertility. The connection with irrigation tanks is noteworthy.

V

THE SIRAHA AND HOMICIDE

It is a curious fact that the leaders of the powers of good against the forces of black magic, especially the Siraha and Gunia, seem to cause quite as many murders as the witch or sorcerer.

The Siraha with his magic winnowing-fan and lamp and broomsticks appears in case after case, not always, of course, as the criminal or victim, but as an influential force in the background.

For example, it is the Siraha who diagnoses the cause of death or disease and who, by naming some living person as the author, directly incites to crime. Equally, by his failure to treat a sick person who believes that he is suffering from witchcraft, he may drive him to despair and suicide.

The Siraha is very proud of his position and his connection with the gods. He is extremely touchy, and immediately resents the least hint of criticism. When Markami Ganga

[1] E. Westermarck, 'Methods in Social Anthropology', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXVI (1936), p. 222, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 440. See also R. Karsten, *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926), p. 408.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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674 abused his brother who had recently taken up his sacred duties,
791 criticizing him as an economic liability to the family, the latter seized the trident in the village temple and killed his critic with it.

Another incident of the same kind occurred in Kosalnar. An old man Hemla Mukka had a leprous wife. He used to call the Siraha, Jhoria Hunga, to his house to treat her. One day when she was feeling specially ill, she asked her husband to go and fetch him. He went for him, but found him asleep. He woke him up and told him what he wanted. But Jhoria, who was tired after watching his fields was annoyed at being woken, and got up and hit the old man saying he was not going to give up his own work in order to treat other people. Mukka went away, but just outside the house he said loudly that his wife could be cured without the help of any Siraha. This Siraha, he said, was a *chor mailotia* (a thief who lay with his mother). When Hunga heard this insult to his profession, he came out of the house with a heavy bamboo stick and beat Mukka till he died.

Iron trident

791 One of the features of any
343 Siraha's house is the little hut for 'in-patients' built a short distance away in the garden or under trees. Especially when a Siraha gets some kind of reputation for diagnosis and cure, he is visited by patients from many different villages. These come laden with dark and unknown infections and must not be admitted into his house. Little huts of leaves and branches are made for them outside, where they

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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live in some discomfort and under unnatural and strained conditions. These abnormal strains have resulted, more than once, in murder being committed.

674X 791

Barse Chappe was a polygamous invalid. After suffering for some time from giddiness and trouble with his heart and eyes, he went to the village Siraha named Pocha for treatment. He became an 'in-patient' and was accommodated in a little hut. After Chappe had spent three days there, he felt better and went to Jagdalpur to give evidence in a police case. Here again he got ill and fell to the ground in a fit, and the Public Prosecutor was compelled to give him up. He returned to his own house, but when he reached it he had to spend the night outside on the verandah, as his wives told him that he would have to offer certain sacrifices in gratitude for his previous recovery before he could enter the house. The following day he again went to the Siraha for treatment and camped under a mango tree nearby. He was accompanied by his senior wife Sukhi and his little daughter Bode. From time to time his junior wife Chule, who remained in charge of the home, came to see him. After a week, one afternoon when Chule had brought food, Chappe asked both his wives to have intercourse with him in the hut. They refused saying that the place was too open, and that it was daytime and everyone would see them. Chappe got angry and beat both the women.

A few days later, at about 5 o'clock in the evening, Chappe again asked his senior wife to have intercourse with him in the hut. But Bode and two women were sitting only a few paces away on the verandah of the Siraha's hut—whence the hut was in full view—again they were able to overhear Chappe's conversation. Sukhi again refused and told her husband that he ought to be ashamed of himself for suggesting such a thing in the hearing of three other women, especially when one of them was his own daughter.

At this Chappe lost his temper. He picked up a heavy bamboo stick and beat his wife so heavily that she died.

674X 158

In his defence Chappe gave evidence of delusions. He denied that his reason for beating Sukhi was that she refused to have intercourse with him. He said that for the past week she had been giving him contaminated food. He had asked her not to cook in the Siraha's house where anybody might